

## SHAFTESBURY RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

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### Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for 1940.

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This Report is prepared on the lines asked for by the Minister of Health in Circular 2314. In accordance with his directions most information usually contained in the Report is omitted and filed for future reference.

Noel F. Pearson M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H. commenced duties as Medical Officer of Health on January 22nd, 1940.

The District Council became a Constituent Authority of the North Dorset Joint Hospital Board on its constitution on April 1st 1940.

#### Infectious Disease

Apart from a mild type of Measles which was epidemic during the latter half of the year, and a slight increase in the incidence of Cerebro-spinal Fever in the first half of the year, no comment is called for.

The Council adopted a Scheme for the active immunisation against Diphtheria of all children between one and fifteen years of age which came into operation early in 1941.

#### Water Supplies

In accordance with the direction of the Minister of Health a Scheme was adopted for the chlorination of all the Council's supplies and the owners of private supplies in the area were advised to arrange for the chlorination of those supplies. Up to the end of the year no action had been taken by private owners in this direction.

#### Sanitary Work

The extra calls made upon the Sanitary Inspectors during the year on account of new duties peculiar to the war, reduced the amount of time at their disposal for ordinary sanitary duties, in particular inspection under the Housing Acts and Food Inspection. That such is unavoidable is to be regretted when it is so essential to maintain all available property in a habitable condition for the extra demands the future will call for. Without the usual supervision there is a real possibility of property which could be saved by early attention, degenerating beyond reasonable repair. Without regular sanitary inspections it has been impossible to keep unnecessary overcrowding under control with the result that the effects began to show themselves several months later by an increased incidence of Scabies and similar manifestations.

#### Air Raid Precautions (Casualty) Services.

Although the services of the First Aid Party and First Aid Post Personnel had to be called upon to treat air raid casualties, for the most part their duties have been of a stand-by nature, and they are to be congratulated on maintaining their keenness and efficiency during prolonged waiting periods.

The Rural nature of the area has led to a very definite decentralisation of the organisation of the Casualty Services. The recent Government sanction for the official use of Medical Practitioners at air raid incidents and for domiciliary treatment of casualties has considerably strengthened the organisation in the wide rural area of your district.

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## Government Evacuation Scheme

Organised groups of unaccompanied children were received during the year. At medical inspection on arrival very few were found to be unclean or verminous. In addition, a steady flow of persons of all classes from more vulnerable areas led to a filling of much of the available accommodation.

One Hostel with accommodation for ten children was established for the reception of children unsuitable for billeting in private houses. The Sick Bay facilities offered by Vine House, Sturminster Newton provided adequately for all needs, and few applications were received for Home Nursing Grants. 63 cases were admitted to Vine House Hospital from the District during the year.

It would appear to me that insufficient recognition and praise is given to the unselfish housewives and others who, for prolonged periods have taken into their often already crowded houses, others' children to give them safety, and who have patiently and without grumbling, carried out one of the most important aspects of the nation's war effort. In my work I am in a position to assess the admirable qualities of these people and the result of the care given to the children for whom they become responsible. For this reason I pay to them my respect in this Report.

In termination I would also record, with gratitude, the support given to me by the Council during my first year of office, the assistance given to me by the Sanitary Inspectors and the efficient service rendered by my clerk.

NOEL F. PEARSON,

Medical Officer of Health.

16th May, 1941.